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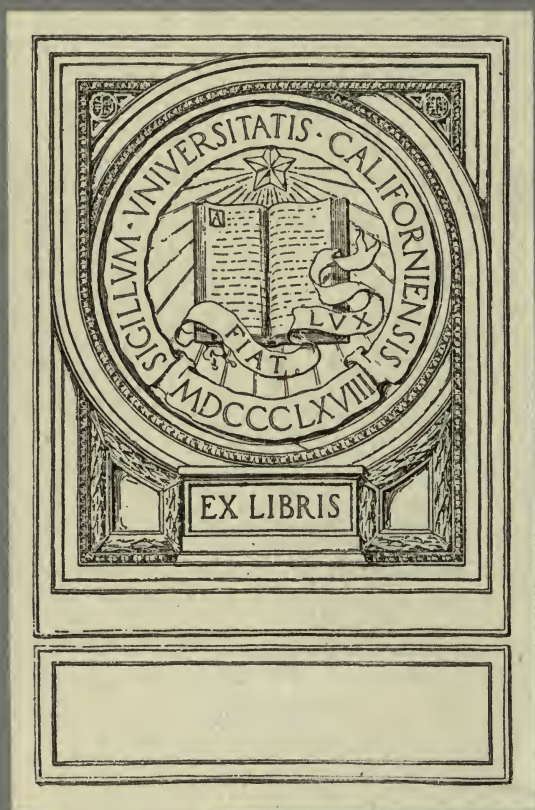
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A DAY AT EVESHAM.

THE VISITORS'
GUIDE TO ITS ANTIQUITIES

AND OTHER OBJECTS OF INTEREST.

BY
HERBERT NEW.

"HAPPY IS ENGLAND? I COULD BE CONTENT
TO SEE NO OTHER VERDURE THAN ITS OWN;
TO FEEL NO OTHER BREEZES THAN ARE BLOWN
THROUGH ITS TALL WOODS WITH HIGH ROMANCES BLENT."
John Keats.

NEW AND REVISED EDITION,
*(Containing a Plan showing the site of the Abbey Church and
Conventual Buildings of Evesham).*

THREEPENCE.

EVESHAM:
W. AND H. SMITH, STEAM PRINTERS, BRIDGE STREET.
1881.

THIRD EDITION—REVISED.

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MAP OF
THE AVON AND NEIGHBOURING PARISHES.



Scale of Miles.

NO. 100
ANNALS
OF THE
AVON

A DAY AT EVESHAM.

THE VISITORS' GUIDE TO ITS ANTIQUITIES AND
OTHER OBJECTS OF INTEREST.



EVESHAM, a name of two syllables, divided thus, Eves-ham, and locally called Esam, is situated at the south-east corner of the county of Worcester, and close to each of the adjoining counties of Warwick and Gloucester. It gives its name to the Vale of Evesham, a tract of undulating land (chiefly on the lower lias limestone, but northwards on the red marl or keuper), fertile in corn, fruit, and pasture, watered by the Avon and its tributaries, as that famous river approaches its confluence with the Severn, and stretching from west to east, according to the topographical poet, Drayton, from Malvern to Meon. The Cotswolds, a range of hills of the inferior oolite formation, and attaining at Broadway Tower a height of 1080 feet above the level of the sea, are the south-western boundary of this Vale. The Dumbleton and Bredon Hills, outlying from the Cotswold ridge, are the picturesque features of the south and south-west. Due west the granite peaks of Malvern bound the smiling plain; and the Vale is enclosed

on the north by the Lench Hills, which stretch back towards Alcester and the Ridgway. The town of Evesham is 15 miles from Worcester, 17 from Cheltenham, 14 from Stratford-on-Avon, 21 from Warwick and Leamington, and 30 from Birmingham; and the Great Western and Midland Railways, which cross near their Evesham stations, give direct and frequent communication with all these places. Commanding the produce of the Vale, Evesham has a good weekly Corn Market and monthly Cattle Fairs; and, in addition to its connection with a wide surrounding district of fertile farms, it has a local trade in its market gardens, which supply Birmingham, the Black Country, the Potteries, the South Wales Coal and Iron Districts, Manchester and other northern towns, and even Glasgow and remoter places with vegetables and fruits. The origin of the fertility which constitutes the celebrity of what has been called "Fat E'sam," the "Garden of England," and "An Eden of Fertility," is probably due to the industry of "The Monks" and the early establishment of the monastery here: and after the destruction of that establishment, there are good reasons to attribute the revival of gardening in Evesham to a Genoese nobleman, Signor Bernardi, who settled here in the middle of the seventeenth century. The population of Evesham according to the last census (1881) is 5112, being an increase of 224 since the year 1871, and an increase of 1120 in the fifty years since the census of 1831. The estimated gross rental of property in the Borough is £23,000, of which two thirds are of houses and one third of land. The area of the borough is about 2150 acres. During the last twenty years, land in the adjoining villages of Offenham, Badsey, and Hampton has been brought largely into cultivation as garden land, and at rents rising to £4 and £5 per acre, and so nearly up to the average of Evesham land; but the highest rents paid for land in Evesham are for the "Abbey Lands," surrounding

the town, and rich with the alluvium of the neighbouring river, through long cultivation, and in the maturity of the well-selected and crowded fruit trees.

From whichever side the railway traveller arrives at Evesham, he will have seen or crossed the river Avon within a quarter of a mile of the Stations. Evesham, is in fact, situated on the Avon (originally made navigable under a royal grant of Charles I.), and at the southern extremity of a loop of the river, in the shape of a horse-shoe, of nearly three miles extent, running from Offenham southwards through Evesham, and round to the north towards Fladbury. Within this loop is the rising ground or hill called Green Hill, which is the northern part of the Borough. It has a few villa and cottage residences on the road leading out northwards to Alcester and Birmingham; but its sides are covered with garden ground and orchards. The Great Western and Midland Railways cut straight from east to west across this loop, and divide Evesham from Green Hill. Proceeding from the Railway Stations, the visitor enters Evesham from the north, and goes down the broad High Street, with its variety of old and modern houses, its avenue of plantain trees, and the wide spaces between the carriage road and the pavements, which are used on fair-days for pens and standing for cattle.

Evesham was formerly a place of woollen manufacture, especially that of stockings, but these trades have long passed away. At the present time the water and steam Flour Mills of Messrs. Hancox & Bomford on the Avon, and the steam Saw Mills of Mr. Espley and some active building works, are the only sources of the employment of labour besides the Market Gardens, to which we have already referred.

THE BELL TOWER.

The Bell Tower, which is seen on approaching and

entering the High Street, is one hundred and ten feet high, and is the most beautiful and the most conspicuous feature in the town itself, and in every view which can be obtained from the nearer as well as from the more distant hills in the Vale. An almost singular instance in English church architecture of a detached and independent Campanile, a fine and peculiar specimen of the Perpendicular style, it represents the latest effort of the piety, pride, and munificence which in the centuries preceding the Reformation covered England with its gorgeous abbeys and cathedrals. It was built by Abbot Lichfield, the last Abbot of Evesham but one, between 1533 and 1539, and was not completed when the Abbey Church, — of which it was the last, and perhaps noblest ornament, at once its Gateway, Horologe and Belfry, — was laid in ruins around it. Spared for its beauty and its uses, it remains to be the delight and joy of those who are most familiar with its features and the wonder of even the most careless visitors. Strangers are surprised to see this stately Tower with the two Parish Churches all in one enclosing Churchyard. It is more surprising to imagine what might be seen on the same spot three hundred and forty-five years ago, when the great pile of the Abbey Church, with a lofty central Tower, corresponding perhaps with the present Bell Tower in height, overshadowed the little Churches under its northern side, and raised its magnificent choir upon the edge of the steep bank of what is now called the Cross Churchyard.

THE ABBEY.

The foundation of the Abbey of Evesham dates from 701, and is attributed to the munificence of Ethelred, King of Mercia, who endowed it, and to the piety of St. Egwin, Bishop of Worcester, who was its founder and first Abbot; and the choice of the site is ascribed to Egwin's swineherd Eoves, who

had a vision of the Virgin Mary in the forest where he tended his swine, and whose name is perpetuated in the name of the Abbey and of the town which grew up around it. The history of the Abbey it is impossible to trace in a small compass. It stretches backward into the age of pious tradition. St. Egwin's pilgrimage to Rome with fettered feet, to find in the Tiber the key which he had thrown into the Avon at his departure, whereby he at once obtained the assurance of grace and the unlocking of his bonds, is represented in the Abbey Arms by a chain and horselock in chevron between three mitres. It also ranges through all the ecclesiastical struggles of the middle ages. The Abbey indeed belongs to a period in English history whereof the traces are nearly obliterated. Religion and Government since the sixteenth century are wholly changed, and we of the modern period have little sympathy with the traditions of the middle ages, coloured by ideas and feelings so different from our own. Our purpose in this brief narrative is only to indicate the few visible traces of the past that still remain. The most ancient relic of the Abbey of Evesham is the old Norman gateway through which you pass from the south-east corner of the Market Place into the Churchyard. The semi-circular arches on each side are very remarkable, and it is evident that the bases of the semi-columns which support them are below the present surface of the soil, which has indeed accumulated for ages, as is shown by the descent into the yard of the Vicarage, and into the floor of All Saints Church. Once, doubtless, an arch sprung over the gateway from the capitals of the sunken columns. Now a wooden tenement crosses and covers the space. The age of the old Norman gateway is supposed to be of the twelfth century.

THE PARISH CHURCHES.

Of the two parish churches, that of All Saints has recently

been restored. The parish church of Saint Lawrence was restored in 1837. There are interesting specimens of architecture in both of them. The mortuary chapel of Abbot Lichfield, buried there in 1546, is on the south side of All Saints Church, and shows traces of stained glass in the windows and a fan-roofed stone ceiling. The northern aisle and chancel are attributed to the early part of the thirteenth century.

In the Church of Saint Lawrence, the Vestry or Baptistery (as it is now used for both) is worthy of note. It is a square chapel, with a stone roof of fan tracery, with an elaborate central pendant of the richest Tudor style, similar to King's Chapel in Cambridge. The Chapel is traditionally associated with Clement Lichfield, to whom is also said to be due the delicate carving of the buttresses of the great east window of this church. The font in St. Lawrence Church is a modern copy of the ancient one which was removed when this church was restored.

THE CLOISTER ARCH.

A relic of great beauty and interest, the only actual relic of the Abbey Church now existing, is a decorated archway to be seen in the Cross Churchyard, south of the Bell Tower. Erected about 1317, it formed the entrance from the Cloister to the Chapter House, and is now the gateway into some private gardens which cover the site of the cloisters. Let the visitor, as he stands beneath this archway and looks eastward over the meadows and the river, imagine himself as leaving the cloisters of the Abbey Church, and entering a passage leading to the Chapter House. On his left hand is the south transept of the great church, the nave of which extends from the central tower 150 feet backwards; the choir stretches 100 feet forwards to the edge of the sloping bank, and the

chapter room lying immediately before him, extends nearly as far as the choir of the church. The northern transept of the church approaches to the Bell Tower.

THE CONVENTUAL BUILDINGS.

What a volume of history is obliterated by the removal of these ancient buildings. When the last Abbot of Evesham had made the legal surrender to the Royal Commissioners, in 1539, the buildings were sold, dismantled, carted away, burnt for lime, used as rubbish, or employed in the foundations of whatever buildings, bridges, or houses might be in the course of erection for many following years. It is a fact that up to the present time whatever old buildings are removed, or foundations dug up, there are found wrought stones, many of exquisite device, which once formed the pinnacles and traceries of the proud Abbey of Evesham. Of the conventual buildings, formerly of such magnitude that it has been said of them that out of Oxford and Cambridge there was not to be found so great an assemblage of religious buildings in the kingdom, so little remains as to require only a glance from the casual visitor. At the bottom of Vine Street, the broad street which continues the line of the High Street past the Town Hall, may be seen a gable with a stone-mullioned window and some old-looking buildings beside it. This was the Almonry, the residence of the Almoner, and the place of distribution of those alms which in old times represented the relief now administered under the poor-law. The basement storey of the old buildings contains some interesting remains of domestic architectural decoration of the Tudor period. But the proportion which these remains bear to the magnificent abode of the Mitred Abbot of Evesham with its gatehouse, halls, quadrangles, courts, chapels, almonry, and

other offices, is but the same as that borne by the solitary arch in the Cross Churchyard to the great church which rose up beside it. The walls enclosing the Abbey and its gardens may be traced in a few places stretching in almost a straight line to the river eastward and westward, on one side to the Bridge and on the other to the foot of Clark's Hill; the Avon itself completing the circuit. Within this space lie what are still called the Abbey Gardens, belted along the river by broad meadows; and at the bottom of the slopes in and near the Cross Churchyard may be traced the ponds which were used for keeping a supply of fish for the Monastery, and probably as ornamental waters in the Abbey grounds.

BENGEWORTH.

The ecclesiastical survey of the town of Evesham includes another church, St. Peter's; and introduces us to that part of Evesham which lies on the left bank of the Avon and is called Bengeworth. But here instead of antiquity we find novelty. A new and commodious church, with a handsome tower and lofty spire, was erected in this parish nine years ago, at a cost of about four thousand five hundred pounds, on a new and elevated site, and in the line of the principal street of Bengeworth called Port Street. The church was opened on the 4th December, 1872.

All that remains of the ancient church here, the dilapidated condition whereof rendered its removal necessary, is the base of the Tower, and the Churchyard, closed against burials some years past. Bengeworth was originally the site of a castle. The moat is still traceable, and the name of Port Street seems to point to the guarded entrance or approach to the bridge and the river. Nor does history fail us in instances of strife between the Abbot and the Baronial Castle. In the twelfth

century Abbot Andeville excommunicated William de Beauchamp, took his castle of Bengeworth, rased its walls and converted its site into a cemetery. Later and final instances of "controversies and dissensions" were extinguished by the incorporation of Bengeworth with Evesham by the charter of James I. in 1605.

GUILDHALL.

At the end of High Street is the Town Hall or Guildhall, the older portion of which was built a little earlier than 1586. The basement was until lately an open arcade, and was used anciently for pitching corn and since as a butter and poultry market. The upper room has undergone many alterations from its original condition, and has recently been greatly improved by the raising, arching, and panelling of the ceiling. The Council Chamber contains a full length portrait of Sir Charles Cockerell, painted by Hayter. Below the Council Chamber is the Police Station and "Lock-up." In connection with this structure it is proper to state that after the dissolution of the Abbey and the intermediate condition of Evesham as a Manor, with court leet, steward and bailiffs, it became a Corporate Borough under a charter granted by James I., and dated 2nd March, 1604. Under this first charter the local affairs were to be managed by two bailiffs, twelve aldermen, and twelve principal burgesses. The grant was made in the name of the unfortunate Prince Henry, whose early death cast a gloom over the kingdom. His arms as Prince of Wales, the feathers, as Duke of Cornwall, the border of black with gold "bezants," and as Earl of Chester, the wheatsheaf, are all combined to form the arms of the Borough. In 1605, by a second charter, incorporating Bengeworth; the high-bailiff was created mayor, and the number of aldermen reduced to seven, and two burgesses were directed to be returned to represent

the borough in Parliament. The charters and patents with which Evesham as well as other municipal boroughs was troubled in the times of the later Stuarts are matters of historical interest to the student, but need not be more than referred to here. Under the Municipal Reform Act of William IV., this Borough became assimilated to others of like origin; and we need follow the municipal history no further, except to state that the Commissioners, theretofore acting under a local Improvement Act for paving and lighting the streets in the borough passed in the year 1824, became identified with the mayor, aldermen and common council of the Borough, which constitutes a single ward for their representation. It may be here noticed that Evesham was first lighted by gas in 1836, through the enterprise of Mr. John Gibbs, who afterwards transferred the works to a Company. From this Company the Corporation of Evesham purchased the works, in 1877, and subsequently greatly improved them. The old Booth-hall, used for Municipal purposes, and for the Courts and other public purposes, before the Guildhall was built, is a fine block of ancient Timber building occupying the north side of the Market Place. It is not difficult to imagine its ancient condition with booths or open shops in the basement, and the public rooms and offices in the upper floors.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

The Free Grammar School of Prince Henry of Evesham is due to the charter of 1605; but Clement Lichfield, the munificent abbot, to whom we have already referred, built the first Grammar School on Merstowe Green, on the site of the school-house till lately used for the present school. The porch of this building, sadly modernized, contains the old Latin inscription of gratitude, "Orate pro anima Clementis Abbat." By the exertions of the late lamented Vicar of Evesham,

the Rev. F. W. Holland, a new scheme for the management of the Grammar School has been obtained, additional endowments secured, and a commodious mansion on Green Hill, known as "Lanesfield," acquired for the future school house. A grant of £10 annually from the Exchequer is the original royal foundation of this "endowed" school. In 1858, Mr. Isaac Averill Roberts, of Croscombe, in the county of Somerset, grateful for his boyhood's education in this school, bequeathed his residuary personal estate in its favour, a gift which now yields about £18 a year. The increased endowments under the new scheme are expected to raise the annual income of the foundation very considerably, and to make "The Free Grammar School" a most valuable institution. The sudden death of the late Mr. Holland, at Thun, in Switzerland, which occurred when this edition was passing through the press (27th August, 1881), demands a record of the irreparable loss which Evesham has sustained by his removal from the sphere of his arduous and benevolent labours.

CLARK'S HILL.

Whoever may seek the quaint inscription over the Grammar School doorway, will also see, at the further end of "the Green," the "National School," and beyond it the green slope of Clark's Hill, which bears marks of terraces for the culture of the vine in the time of the Abbey. Crossing Hampton Ferry, at the bottom of Boat Lane, this vineyard-hill may be ascended, and the view therefrom of the town, surrounded by its gardens, and of the Avon-watered vale, will richly reward the visitor.

THE INSTITUTE AND FARMERS' HALL.

In the Market Place, and opposite the Town Hall, is the Evesham Institute and Merchants and Farmers' Hall. The

former dating its commencement with a humble "Mechanics' Institution" in 1838, has subsequently absorbed the older Town Library and Reading-room, and in 1868, with the aid of the Evesham Corn Exchange, built a handsome Hall, which is the Corn Market on Mondays (the Evesham market days), and at all other times used for the purposes of the Institute and for general public purposes. The Reading-room on the basement storey is open from morning till night; a room behind is used for classes and for the meetings of the Ancient Order of Foresters. In the Council Room, behind the Farmers' Hall, are the geological collections and scientific library, presented to the Institute by John Gibbs, Esq. The Reading Room contains a good library, which has recently been improved by gifts and bequests, particularly from the late John Langton Sanford, Esq., through his brother, Henry Sanford, Esq., and from the late John Colston, Esq.

THE STREETS.

The streets of Evesham are regular and generally well-built. Bridge Street is almost as picturesque as an old Flemish street. Many of the houses in this street show marks of considerable antiquity. In that numbered 57, now in Mr. Doeg's occupation, King Charles the First lodged when he visited the borough in 1644. The Crown Hotel, though much modernised, is a specimen of the ancient hostelry, the open galleries of which were closed only within the last forty or fifty years. Scarcely any crowded courts or alleys are to be found in the town, and the spaces enclosed by the quadrangular arrangement of the buildings are filled with gardens which impart a freshness of air in even the more populous parts of the town. No manufacturing processes injuriously effect the atmosphere. No tall chimneys rise above the houses to impair or contrast with the

elegant forms of the Bell Tower, its companion spires of All Saints and St. Lawrence, or the new spire of Bengeworth

PLACES OF WORSHIP.

Several congregations of voluntary Churches have places of worship in Evesham, which are well-supported and maintained. The Baptist Church, has restored its Meeting House, and built an excellent School Room in the Cowl Street. The Unitarian Congregation, commonly called Presbyterian, have done the same things in Oat Street. The Wesleyans have also improved their place of worship in Chapel Street. A modern and commodious building in the Market Place is at present unused. A Meeting House in Mill Street, formerly held by a second Baptist Congregation, is now used by the Christian Brethren. The Friends' Meeting House in Cowl Street is old and of simple construction, and the building itself may perhaps date back to the visits of George Fox, recorded in his Journal.

SCHOOLS.

Of Schools, not yet referred to, it is proper to mention a foundation in Bengeworth by Alderman John Deacle, a native of Evesham, who by his will, dated 1706, made a bequest for the education, clothing, and apprenticeship of poor boys. The School House, built in 1738, is on the south side of Port Street, Bengeworth. This school is lately settled on a new scheme under the Charity Commissioners. There are also National Schools in Bengeworth; and in Evesham an Infant School, as well as the British Schools.

THE COTTAGE HOSPITAL.

This new building stands in Briar Close Lane, at the back of the High Street. It was opened on the 11th of December,

1879, and is wholly supported by voluntary donations and subscriptions, and by the gratuitous services of the medical men of the borough.

THE BRIDGE.

The new Bridge over the Avon, and the Workman Gardens along the Bengeworth river-side, are the most striking modern improvements to the external character and appearance of the town; and the latter particularly have been the means of attracting visitors at all times during the summer season, and especially on the occasion of the annual Regatta and Flower Show. "To the public spirit and perseverance of Henry Workman, Esq., the origin and completion" of the new Bridge are duly and honourably attributed in an inscription upon the Bridge itself, which was opened in the year 1856, and is one of the most elegant structures in the county. The old bridge of eight arches of different shapes and sizes was narrow and inconvenient, and with recesses at intervals on the north side of the walled roadway for the retreat of foot passengers from the danger of passing vehicles. In fact it had nothing but its antiquity and picturesqueness to plead in its favour; and the increasing traffic which has arisen by means of the railroads and the extension of market gardens in the neighbourhood has more than justified the wise foresight and singular self-devotion which did so much to provide the convenient and handsome modern bridge now one of the ornaments of the town.

THE WORKMAN GARDENS.

The Pleasure Grounds, which bear the name so honourably associated with the Bridge, arose by the same personal enterprise. When the channel of the river had been widened and freed from the osier beds which once divided and almost

wholly concealed its stream, it was a happy idea of Mr. Henry Workman to turn to advantage the line of ground gained upon the left bank of the river by laying it out and planting it as a promenade and pleasure ground for the use and adornment of the town. These gardens are kept up by public subscription, aided by a small payment for entrance levied upon strangers, or included in the admission tickets on particular occasions. From this charming promenade are seen the site of the Abbey, crowned with the Bell Tower and Churches; the Bridge itself, and the picturesque groupings of the houses above it; the green open meadows, the fine mass of Bredon Hill diversified with woods and fields, and the river flowing through a landscape in which elms and willows blend their foliage with the fruit trees of the fertile garden grounds. The Northwick Arms Hotel overlooks these gardens and commands the same beautiful views.

THE BATTLE FIELD.

A walk from the Railway Stations, of half a mile northwards up the high road over Green Hill, leads to the Battle Field, where on Tuesday, August the 4th, 1265, in the midst of a tempest as memorable as the day, the Vindicator of English Liberties against court corruption and foreign influence and the originator of popular Parliamentary representation, Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, fell, with his son Henry and many Barons, hopelessly fighting against Prince Edward (afterwards Edward I.) and the royalist army. The north road is crossed on the top of the hill, by the old road from Worcester which runs along the ridge and is then continued eastward down a lane to the river. On the Evesham side of the ridge, on its southern slopes and in the beautiful sweeping hollow of Mr. Rudge's estate, the battle was fought.

Across this hollow is a fine view of the Vale and of Bredon Hill ; and at the upper part of it, not far from the high road, is a pool called Battlewell, which marks the spot where Earl Simon is believed to have fallen. The great Earl arrived at Evesham on Monday night or early on Tuesday morning, and was received with his train into the Abbey, having with him King Henry III., who had been placed in Montfort's custody after the successful battle of Lewes, fought about fifteen months before. He had come up from Hereford by way of Kempsey, with the intention of joining his son, Simon the Younger, at Kenilworth, or between Evesham and Kenilworth, so that they might unite their forces against Prince Edward and the Royalists who gathered round him when he escaped from the custody of Henry de Montfort in the previous May. The Prince had made a rapid march from Worcester to Kenilworth, and there, on Sunday, the 2nd of August, attacked the younger Simon, driving him into his castle, and carrying off prisoners, baggage and standards, which he brought with him up to Evesham early on Tuesday morning. The Earl must have been ignorant of the Prince's movements and of the younger Simon's defeat, or he would not have rested at Evesham merely to gratify the King's desire "to hear mass and to dine." Early on Tuesday morning, the Earl's barber, Nicholas, ascended the clock-tower of the Abbey and saw an army bearing friendly standards coming over the hill on the north of the town. He reported this to the Earl, who also ascended the tower and discovered to his dismay the superior forces of the Prince who had employed the standards taken at Kenilworth as false signals to conceal his approach. Full of despair, and after vainly trying to persuade his son Henry to save himself by flight, De Montfort exclaimed, "May the Lord have mercy on our souls, for our bodies are in the enemies' power." He then went forth

to meet the Prince ; and though, as an old writer says, "he fought stoutly like a giant for the liberties of England," he fell, overpowered by numbers, in the midst of his friends, and by his death gained for his principles the victory which was lost to his arms. Henry III., on declaring himself during the battle to a soldier who attacked him as "Henry of Winchester your King," was rescued and restored to his son. The victor cruelly revenged himself on De Montfort's body, which he ordered to be dismembered and the separate limbs dispersed. A worthier fate was awarded to "the Martyr" by the monks of Evesham. Some fragments of his body piously laid in front of the high altar of the Abbey made it the scene of many wonderful cures recorded to have been wrought both by the Earl's remains and by the water of Battlewell. An ancient chronicle of these "Miracles" presents a quaint parallel to the present advertisements of patent medicines. In Mr. Rudge's grounds an obelisk is erected as a memorial of the battle, with a bas-relief of the rescue of the King, and an extract from Drayton's *Polyolbion*. A tower on the other side of the same grounds, in front of the Abbey Manor House, and overlooking the river, is called "Leicester Tower," in honour of the great Earl. A contemporary describes him as "that glorious man" who devoted not only his property but himself in behalf of the oppressed poor and in the assertion of justice and of national rights ; and commends him further for his literary ability, his devout habits, frugality, gravity, and trustworthiness.

THE STORMING OF EVESHAM, 1645.

The storming of Evesham on Monday, the 26th of May, 1645, by Colonel Massey, the Parliamentary Governor and resolute defender of the city of Gloucester, whereby the town was wrested from the Royalists in the course of the "Great

Rebellion," must not be altogether overlooked even in this brief local guide. Colonel Legge had been left in command of the town by the King, who had then made his third visit to Evesham and garrisoned it before proceeding towards Chester. Colonel Massey, with 700 foot and 800 horse, after summons and a haughty refusal from the Royalist commander, attacked the fortifications in five places on the Worcester side and simultaneously at the Bridge on the Bengeworth side. The contest began at daybreak, lasted about an hour, and was very furious. The number of prisoners taken was 548, including 70 officers. The number of slain on both sides is reported to have been "less than could have been expected," namely, about 17, and 30 wounded.

For this exploit, which left the whole country between Evesham and Bristol in the hands of the Parliament, and cut off Royalist communications between Oxford and Worcester, Colonel Massey received the thanks of the House on the 29th of May. In July following, Colonel Rouse was appointed Parliamentary Governor of the town, and on his death the following year Major Dingley was appointed in his place.

WALKS ABOUT EVESHAM.

The visitor to the Battle Field, by pursuing his walk for two miles will arrive at the village of Norton, and find in the church there some interesting monuments of the Bigge family, one of whom was a nephew of Sir Philip Hoby, the grantee of the dissolved monastery, and a member of Parliament for Evesham in 1604. This church also contains a marble lectern which once belonged to the Abbey, and some architectural relics brought together by the care and taste of the Rev. N. G. Batt, the present incumbent. On the other side of the town are the pleasant villages and churches

of Hampton, Badsey, and Wickhamford; the last-mentioned church containing fine monuments of the Sandys family, of the Stuart period. On both sides of the town are pleasant walks along the meadows by the river side, where the botanist will find a great variety of flowers. The towing path up the Long Meadow is particularly recommended as leading to Offenham Ferry (once the site of a bridge), and over the Ferry to Offenham, named from Offa, King of Mercia, and its beautifully restored church.

An agreeable way of enjoying the Avon below the town is afforded in summer time by steamers which make short excursions from Mr. Spragg's Wharf and from the Fleece Inn. The opportunities of boating and angling in the Avon will to many be its chief attractions.

HISTORICAL BOOKS RELATING TO EVESHAM.

For those who may require full information about Evesham and its history we enumerate the following works, though all except the last two are out of print:—

1.—The History and Antiquities of the Abbey and Borough of Evesham: carefully compiled from MSS in the British Museum. By William Tindal, M.A., Evesham, 1794. 4to. This is a handsome quarto with good illustrations, and is a very creditable production from our local press at the close of the last century.

2.—A Short Account of the History and Antiquities of Evesham. By E. J. Rudge, Esq. 1820.

3.—The History of Evesham. By George May. 1834.

4.—A Descriptive History of the Town of Evesham from the Foundation of its Saxon Monastery; with Notices respecting the ancient Deanery of its Vale. By George May. Based upon a former publication of the Author, revised throughout. Evesham, 1845.

5.—The Barons' War: including the Battles of Lewes and Evesham. By William Henry Blaauw, Esq., M.A. Edited by C. H. Pearson, Esq. 1871.

6.—The Journal of the British Archæological Association. Vol. XXXII. 1876. This volume contains valuable Papers, read at the Meeting of the Association held at Evesham in August, 1875, under the presidency of the Marquis of Hertford.

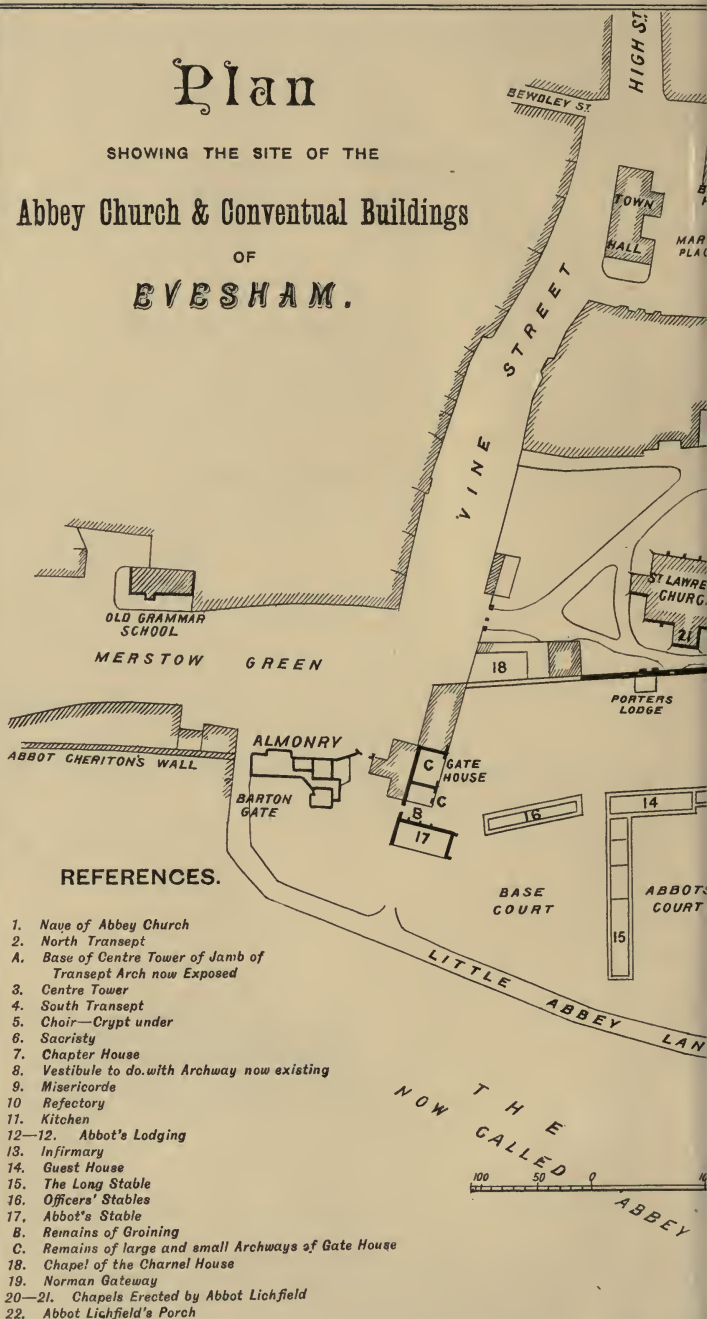
7.—The Life of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester. By George Walter Prothero. Longmans, 1877. Contains a Map to illustrate the Battle of Evesham, and a careful attempt to elucidate the event.



Plan

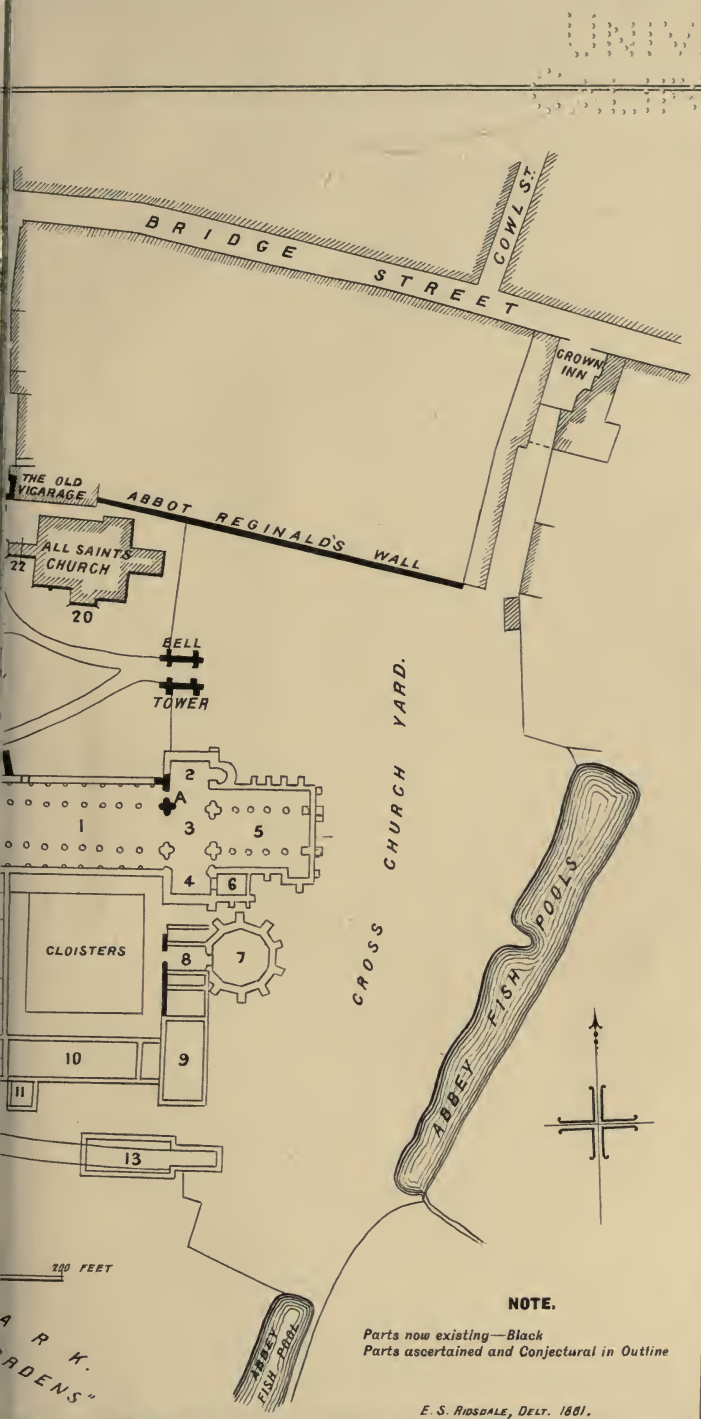
SHOWING THE SITE OF THE

Abbey Church & Conventual Buildings OF EVESHAM.



REFERENCES.

1. Nave of Abbey Church
2. North Transept
- A. Base of Centre Tower of Jamb of Transept Arch now Exposed
3. Centre Tower
4. South Transept
5. Choir—Crypt under
6. Sacristy
7. Chapter House
8. Vestibule to do. with Archway now existing
9. Misericorde
10. Refectory
11. Kitchen
- 12-12. Abbot's Lodging
13. Infirmary
14. Guest House
15. The Long Stable
16. Officers' Stables
17. Abbot's Stable
- B. Remains of Groining
- C. Remains of large and small Archways of Gate House
18. Chapel of the Charnel House
19. Norman Gateway
- 20-21. Chapels Erected by Abbot Lichfield
22. Abbot Lichfield's Porch



NOTE.

Parts now existing—Black
 Parts ascertained and Conjectural in Outline



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